

Sub 8
polymer is a polyacrylate.

Remarks

Support for new claim 28 is found on page 6, lines 4-5 of the present application.

Rejections

35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The Office Action asserts that claim 5 fails to provide adequate written description for the formula of polyacrylate because the claim fails to define the value of "n".

Applicants have amended claim 5 to indicate that n is a positive number. Support for the amendment is found in U.S. Patent No. 5,597,789 which is incorporated by reference on page 5, lines 24-25 of the present application. The chemical formula is provided therein with no value of n given. However, n cannot be zero. No new matter has been added. *72*

Claims 1-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The Office Action asserts that claim 1 is indefinite:

- 1) because it recites a multi-step cleaning process in the preamble, however, it only positively recites a step of flushing with a pre-rinse solution,
- 2) because it is unclear what is meant by a "partially neutralized" anionic polymer,
- 3) because "said cleaning solution" lacks positive antecedent basis, and
- 4) because it fails to positively recite a step of removing soils from the substrate.

Claim 1 has been amended with respect to 1), 3) and 4). No new matter has been added.

Applicants traverse with respect to the second rejection. Applicants submit that

“partially neutralized”, as opposed to “completely neutralized” or “wholly neutralized”, are all terms which are commonly employed by those of ordinary skill in the art to refer to polymers such as those disclosed and claimed in the present application. See for example, US 6403106; US 6399679; US 5919745; US 4687789; and US 4970258 which are enclosed herewith. The search is also attached. This illustrates that the term is understood in the art.

Furthermore, the Office Action asserts that the specification fails to define partially neutralized. This is not correct. Examples of such polymers are provided on page 6, lines 8-14. Furthermore, example 1 on page 12 employs a 5-10% neutralized polyacrylic acid; solution B on page 16 employs a 5-10% partially neutralized polyacrylic acid; and samples 1 and 3 on page 18 employ a 5-10% neutralized polyacrylic acid. New claim 29 has been added which is directed to such an embodiment.

The Office Action asserts that claim 2 is indefinite for its dependency.

Applicants traverse the rejection and submit that claim 2 is not indefinite based on the same argument as for claim 1 above. “Partially neutralized” is a recognized term of art and means not “completely neutralized” or “wholly neutralized”. Anything less than “wholly neutralized” falls within the purview of claims 1 and 2.

The Office Action asserts that claims 3-4 should be amended to recite proper Markush language “selected from the group consisting of” instead of “which”.

Applicants submit that claim 3 does not recite a Markush group.

Claim 4 has been amended to delete the “and” in line 5 of claim 4 and to replace it with “or”. This is correct terminology.

The Office Action asserts that claim 5 is indefinite because the “n” is not defined.

Applicants have amended claim 5.

The Office Action asserts that claims 6-7 are indefinite because of their dependency. Claim 1 has been amended.

The Office Action asserts that claim 8 is indefinite 1) because it is unclear what is meant by “clean-in-place” and “clean out of place” and 2) because it is unclear how “clean in place” and “clean out of place” can be considered as a process.

Applicants traverse the rejection with respect to the first claim 8. “Clean-in-place” and “clean out of place” are terms of art which are known and used by those of ordinary

skill in the art to refer to specific types of cleaning processes without further definition or explanation of such terms being required. See commonly assigned US 6534075, US 6387864, US 6197739, US 6212219, US 5998358, US 5861366, US 5858117 and US 4878951 which is assigned to A & L Laboratories, Inc. Applicants have also included a search which was conducted for these terms.

See also the patents incorporated by reference on page 11 of the specification including US 5896828, US 5845683, US 496444, US 4688611, US 4593730, US 4527377, US 439044, US 4218265, US 3513024 and US 3430639. Clearly, one of ordinary skill understands what these systems are.

Applicants have amended claim 8 to add the terminology to clarify that such processes are cleaning processes.

The Office Action asserts that claim 9 is indefinite because "heat transfer" equipment surfaces" lack positive antecedent basis since claim 9 is dependent on claim 8.

Due to the amendment to claim 8, claim 9 now has proper antecedent basis.

The Office Action asserts that claim 10 is indefinite because it is unclear at what point the additional step of flushing occurs in the multi-step cleaning process.

Applicants traverse the rejection with respect to claim 10. Applicants submit that when a claim to a process uses "comprising" language, there is no specific order which is required to be read into the claim, unless it is so specified in the claim. In fact, with respect to claim 10, flushing the substrate with an additional rinse solution can be conducted after any of the steps in the process. See page 1, lines 17-25, for example. Consequently, the flushing step may follow any of the steps and claim 10 is not indefinite.

The Office Action submits that claim 11 is indefinite because it is unclear whether "said rinse solution" refers to the solution of claim 1 or that of claim 10.

Claim 11 has been amended to clarify which "said rinse solution" is being referred to.

The Office Action asserts that claim 12 is indefinite 1) because it is unclear whether "the main wash solution" is the same or different from "said cleaning solution" of claim 1 and 2) because it is unclear what is meant by a "neutral solution".

Claim 12 has been amended to clarify the language with respect to 1).

Applicants traverse the rejection with respect to 2). Applicants submit that anyone of ordinary skill in the chemical art would understand what is meant by a “neutral solution”, particularly in light of the fact that the same claim also makes reference to a “caustic” solution and an “acidic solution”. It is quite obvious that this is a reference to the pH. Applicants submit that no amendment to clarify this is required because it would be understood to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The Office Action asserts that claims 13-15 are indefinite because of their dependency.

Claim 1 has been amended with respect to the first, third and fourth rejections. Applicants submit that claim 1 is not indefinite with respect to the second rejection as discussed above. Claims 13-15 depend from claim 1 and the same amendments and arguments pertain.

The Office Action asserts that claim 16 is indefinite because it is unclear whether the surface comes in contact with the food before or after being pre-rinsed with the anionic polymer.

Claim 16 has been amended.

The Office Action asserts that claim 17 is indefinite because it is unclear what applicant means by “tank”.

Claim 17 has been amended.

The Office Action asserts that claims 18-19 are indefinite because of their dependency.

Claim 1 has been amended with respect to the first, third and fourth rejections. Applicants submit that claim 1 is not indefinite as to the second rejection as discussed above. Claims 18-19 depend from claim 1 and the same amendments and arguments pertain.

The Office Action asserts that claims 20-21 are indefinite because it is unclear what the difference is between whey and whey fractions and milk and milk fractions.

Applicants traverse the rejection. Applicants submit that only claim 21 makes reference to whey and whey fractions and milk and milk fractions so the rejection is only relevant with respect to claim 20. Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would understand to what the difference between whey and a whey fraction and the difference between milk and a milk fraction. These are terms of art which are commonly used. See, for example, US 6516796,

US 5919913 and US 5721342. A search which was conducted is also enclosed herewith.

The Office Action asserts that claim 21 is indefinite 1) because it is unclear what is being flushed in steps a and b and 2) because it is unclear what is meant by “partially neutralized” or “neutral rinse solution”.

Claim 21 has been amended with respect to 1).

Applicants traverse the rejection with respect to 2). The terms “partially neutralized” and “neutral rinse solution” would be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art and have been addressed above.

The Office Action asserts that claims 22 and 25-26 are indefinite because of their dependency. Claim 21 from which they depend has been amended with respect to the first rejection and claims 22 and 25-26 are not indefinite with respect to the second rejection for the same reason that claim 21 is not indefinite.

The Office Action asserts that claim 23 is indefinite because it is unclear what is meant by “neutral wash solution.”

Applicants traverse the rejection with respect to claim 23. This term would be understood by those of skill in the art and has been addressed above.

The Office Action asserts that claim 24 should be amended to recite “said pre-rinse solution.”

Claim 24 has been amended as suggested.

Based on the foregoing arguments and amendments, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-27 as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-2, 6-12, 18-19, 21-23 and 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ramachandran et al. (US 4469605). The Office Action asserts that Ramachandran et al. teach a method for cleaning laundry using a heavy duty liquid detergent which can be used for pre-treating of badly soiled portions of items to be laundered.

Applicants traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 is directed to a multi-step cleaning process in which a *pre-rinse solution*

is applied prior to the washing step.

Ramachandran et al., US 4469605

Ramachandran et al. describe a fabric softening heavy duty liquid detergent, useful for both cleaning and softening laundry, including certain proportions of sodium linear higher alkylbenzene sulfonate, sodium alkyl polyethoxy sulfate, builder salt (highly preferably a mixture of sodium tripolyphosphate and sodium carbonate), finely divided swelling *bentonite* and water. Also described by Ramachandran et al. is a process for manufacturing such liquid detergent wherein the swelling bentonite is admixed with a mixture of the other detergent composition components except for part of the water, which is added last to the mixture of such components and the bentonite. (Abstract)

Ramachandran et al. suggest that the detergent composition may be employed as a pre-treatment of badly soiled areas, such as collars and cuffs, or items to be laundered, in which treatment the presence of the bentonite in the liquid, which may be applied directly to the soiled areas, is considered to be useful in mechanically assisting in loosening or removing the soil.

However, Ramachandran et al. does not suggest a pre-rinse prior to application of a main wash detergent.

Thus, Ramachandran et al., in contrast to the present invention, describes a *detergent* composition, not a pre-rinse solution, which pre-rinse solution is applied *prior* to the detergent composition.

The pre-rinse step according to the present invention has been found to result in an improved cleaning method for removing gross soils and also to permit the use of fewer chemicals during a cleaning/washing cycle. The inventions are therefore not the same as required by 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly illustrate that the pre-rinse is a separate step from the washing step. Claims 2, 6-12 and 18-19 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is patentable.

Claim 21 is also directed to a multi-step cleaning method in which a pre-rinse composition including a partially neutralized anionic polymer is applied prior to either another rinsing step and/or a cleaning step. Ramachandran et al. neither describe nor claim such pre-

rinse step prior to application of a detergent composition. Ramachandran et al. do not describe the use of a pre-rinse prior to use of the detergent.

Claims 22-23 and 25-27 depend from claim 21 and are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 21 is patentable.

Based on the foregoing amendments and arguments, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-2, 6-12, 18-19, 21-23 and 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ramachandran et al.

Applicants have also added a new independent claim 30 which is directed to a clean in place process equipment which is soiled with gross soils as a result of contact with milk, milk fractions, whey, whey factions or milk products. The gross soils deposited as a result of contact with these types of products have been found to be more effectively removed using the pre-rinse according to the present invention. Such a cleaning method which includes a pre-rinse with a partially neutralized anionic polymer is not described in Ramachandran et al. which focuses on laundry and not on cleaning-in-place processing equipment. Applicants believe this claim to be patentably distinct over Ramachandran et al. Support for claim 30 is found, among others, on page 11 of the specification. Claim 31 has also been added which depends from 30.

Claims 1-3, 5-16 and 21-26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chun et al. (US 5133892). The Office Action asserts that Chun et al. teach a detergent for use in dishwashing.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a multi-step cleaning process which includes a pre-rinsing step prior to washing with a cleaning composition wherein the pre-rinsing composition includes a partially neutralized anionic polymer, and has been amended such that it is directed to the cleaning of equipment which is in an assembled state.

Independent claim 21 is directed to a multi-step cleaning process in which the pre-rinsing step is conducted either prior to another rinsing step or a washing step. Again, the pre-rinse includes partially neutralized anionic polymer.

Chun et al., US 5133892

Chun et al. is directed to a multilayer detergent tablet which includes an outer layer, a barrier layer and an inner layer. The tablet provides sequential release of a dishwashing

composition and a rinse aid composition such that cleaning is accomplished *prior* to the release of the rinse aid. (Abstract). The tablet may be placed in a prewash detergent dispenser of a dishwashing machine or a main wash dispenser of a dishwashing machine. See claim 25.

In one preferred tablet (Tablet A), the outer layer of the tablet includes an enzyme, and the inner layer includes a source of chlorine bleach. The tablet provides improved storage stability by accommodating the enzyme and the chlorine bleach in different layers separated by the barrier layer. The dissolution of the enzyme and the dissolution of the chlorine bleach are separated in time. Thus, the tablet of the present invention releases the enzyme and affords sufficient time for the enzyme to perform its cleaning function prior to the release of the chlorine bleach. Col. 5, lines 66-68 to col. 6, lines 1-9 and also col. 16, lines 13-51.

In another preferred tablet of the present invention (Tablet B), the outer layer of the tablet contains a dishwashing composition, preferably including either a chlorine bleach or an enzyme, and the inner layer of the tablet contains a rinse aid. Thus, the tablet of the invention releases the dishwashing composition and affords sufficient time for accomplishing dishwashing prior to a release of the rinse aid. Col. 6, lines 10-18 and col. 16, lines 53-61.

A particularly preferred method of dishwashing according to Chun et al. includes placing the first tablet of the present invention (preferably Tablet A) in a prewash dispenser of the dishwashing machine and placing the second tablet of the present invention (preferably Tablet B) in a main wash dispenser of the dishwashing machine. Col. 6, lines 19-29.

Chun et al. teaches the use of these tablets for dishwashing only.

Claim 1 of the present invention, in contrast, is now directed to a multi-step process of cleaning equipment in an assembled state.

Consequently, the inventions are not the same because Chun et al. is not teaching the cleaning of equipment, but rather dishes only.

Claims 2-3 and 5-16 depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is patentable, and claims 22-26 depend from claim 21 and are patentable for at least the reasons that claim 21 is patentable.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-16 and 21-26 as being anticipated by Chun et al.

Claims 1-2, 4-, 6-16, 18, 2-23 and 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C.

no reasons given

§102(e) as being anticipated by Foley et al. (US2002/0037817).

Foley et al., US2002/0037817

Foley et al. describe a hard-surface cleaning composition for removing cooked-, baked-, or burnt-on food soil from cookware and tableware, the composition being in sprayable form and comprising an organic solvent system having a volatile organic content above 1 mm Hg of less than about 50% and an odor masking perfume or perfume base, the perfume or perfume base comprising at least about 20% by weight thereof of non-volatile perfume materials having a boiling point above 250° C at 1 atmosphere pressure. The composition can be used as pre-treatment prior to the dishwashing process. The composition provides excellent removal of polymerized grease from metal and glass substrates and has a very pleasant odor.

Applicants are submitting herewith, a Declaration of Prior Invention under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 by Richard Ruhr, an inventor of the subject matter claimed in the present application, along with exhibits to support the conception and reduction to practice of the invention described and claimed in the above-referenced patent application prior to February 13, 2001.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-2, 4-, 6-16, 18, 2-23 and 25-27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Foley et al., US2002/0037817, based on the declaration and the supporting laboratory notebook pages.

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3, 20, 24 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ramachandran et al. (US 4469605). The Office Action asserts that Ramachandran et al. fail to teach the specific concentration of anionic polymer, as recited in claims 3 and 24, but that in col. 2, lines 48-50, Ramachandran et al. teach the concentration of the polyphosphate should be less than 10%. The Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to adjust the concentration, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art.

In re Aller, 105 USPQ 233.

Claims 3 and 20 depend from claim 1. Claim 1 is directed to a method in which a pre-rinse composition incorporating a partially neutralized anionic polymer is employed prior to use of a cleaning composition, i.e. a detergent. As discussed above, Ramachandran et al. does not teach a pre-rinse composition including a partially neutralized anionic polymer for use prior to a cleaning composition. Ramachandran et al. only describe a detergent composition. Thus, Ramachandran et al. is missing an element of the present invention found in claim 1, i.e. a pre-rinse composition with a partially neutralized anionic polymer. It would not have been obvious from Ramachandran et al. to employ a pre-rinse composition prior to the detergent composition as described therein. Because claims 3 and 20 depend from claim 1, they are not obvious for at least the reasons that claim 1 is not obvious over Ramachandran et al.

Claim 21 is also directed to a multi-step process in which a pre-rinse is employed prior to application of another pre-rinse or prior to application of a cleaning composition or both. Claim 21 is therefore not obvious over Ramachandran et al. for the same reasons that claim 1 is not obvious. Claims 24 and 27 depend from claim 21 and are not obvious at least for the reasons that claim 21 is not obvious.

Further, with respect to claim 3. The Office Action directs us to col. 2, lines 48-50 as evidence that Ramachandran et al. describe the use of polyphosphate as being less than 10%. This is a misinterpretation of what is stated. What Ramachandran et al. are stating is the following:

The builder salt combination of this invention, which has been found to satisfactorily improve detergency of the mixture of synthetic anionic organic detergents, produces the desired pH in the liquid detergent and in the wash water, and coacts with the detergent and the bentonite in the washing and softening process, is a mixture of sodium tripolyphosphate and sodium carbonate. For best processing, easier mixing and good end-use properties it is preferred that the sodium tripolyphosphate be low in content of Phase I type tripolyphosphate. ***Thus, normally the content of Phase I type tripolyphosphate will be less than 10% of the tripolyphosphate employed.***

(col. 2, lines 38-50)

Thus, it is not the ***total*** content of the tripolyphosphate that is being described here. Rather, the ***total amount of builder*** suggested is found at col. 1, lines 37-47 is 6-26% (see Abstract).

Claim 3 of the present invention is directed to an embodiment wherein the partially neutralized anionic polymer is present in the pre-rinse at a concentration of about 5 ppm to about 5000 ppm or about **0.0005% to about 0.5%** of the pre-rinse. Thus, this is much less than 6-26%. Therefore, the amount of partially neutralized anionic polymer in the embodiment described in claim 3, is much less than that described in Ramachandran et al.

Claim 24 is directed to an embodiment having about 25 to about 10,000 ppm of partially neutralized anionic polymer. This is about 0.0025% to about 1%. This is also not obvious over Ramachandran et al. for the same reasons that claim 3 is not obvious. ✓

Claims 20 and 27 are directed to gross soils which comprise whey, whey fractions, milk, milk fractions or other milk products. Ramachandran et al. do not teach pre-rinse composition for removal of such soils. Thus, claims 20 and 27 are patentably distinct over Ramachandran et al. also for this reason. ✓

Based on the foregoing arguments and amendments, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 20, 24 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Ramachandran et al.

Claims 4, 20 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chun et al. (US 5133892).

Chun et al. describes a multi-layer detergent tablet which has an outer layer, a barrier layer and an inner layer which is described in more detail above. The time interval between the release of the outer layer ingredients and the release of the inner layer ingredients is controlled by the particular choice of an ingredient for the barrier layer and the relative thickness of the inner layer. The tablet can also separate in time the release of incompatible ingredients such as an enzyme and chlorine bleach. Because the tablet is layered, it provides a sequential release of a dishwashing composition and a rinse aid composition such that the cleaning is accomplished prior to release of the rinse aid. Chun et al. teaches the tablets for use in dishwashing only.

Claim 1 of the present invention, in contrast, is now directed to cleaning of equipment while in an assembled state. It would not have been obvious from the timed or sequential release dishwashing tablets of Chun et al., to employ a multi-step process including a pre-rinse step having a partially neutralized anionic polymer to clean assembled equipment. Nor ✓

does Chun et al. suggest from the large list of ingredients described therein, that any one is better than another for use in a pre-rinse composition.

Consequently, claim 1 is not obvious over Chun et al. and claims 4 and 20 which depend from claim 1 are not obvious for at least the reasons that claim 1 is not obvious.

Claim 21 is directed to a multi-step process for cleaning hard surfaces. Chun et al. does not teach or suggest hard surface cleaning, but only describes dishwashing whereby there is a prewash cycle and a wash cycle and timed release or sequential release tablets are put in the dishwasher, one in the prewash dispenser and one in the wash dispenser. Hard surface cleaning by its very nature, would not be conducive to employing such tablets. Thus, claim 21 is not obvious over Chun et al. Claim 27 which depends from claim 21 is not obvious over Chun et al. for at least the reasons that claim 21 is not obvious over Chun et al.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection

Claims 3, 17 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Foley et al. (US 2002/0037817).

A Declaration of Prior Invention under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 by Richard Ruhr is being submitted herewith along with appropriate exhibits showing that the invention was both conceived and reduced to practice before February 13, 2001.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 17 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Foley et al. (US 2002/0037817).

CONCLUSION

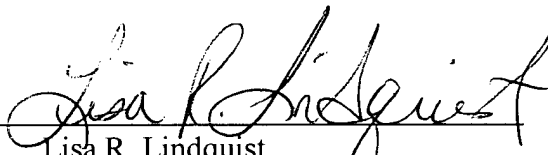
Claims 1-31 are pending in the application. Applicants have addressed each of the issues presented in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and an early allowance of the claims as presented.

Respectfully submitted,

VIDAS, ARRETT & STEINKRAUS

Date: May 23, 2003

By:


Lisa R. Lindquist
Registration No.: 43071

6109 Blue Circle Drive, Suite 2000
Minnetonka, MN 55343-9185
Telephone: (952) 563-3000
Facsimile: (952) 563-3001

MARKED UP VERSION TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Amended) A method for removing gross soils from equipment which is an assembled state [a substrate during] using a multi-step cleaning process, the process comprising the [step] steps of:

a) flushing the equipment [substrate] with a pre-rinse solution prior to application of [said] a

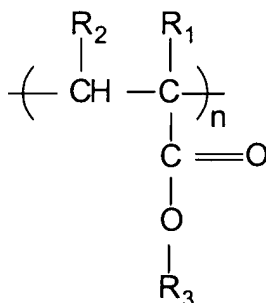
cleaning [solution] composition, said pre-rinse solution comprising water and a partially neutralized anionic polymer; and

b) washing the equipment with a cleaning composition;

whereby gross soils are removed.

4. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said pre-rinse further comprises a co-builder which is ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, diethylenetriaminepentaacetic acid, hydroxyethylethylenediaminetetraacetic acid, aminotri(methylenephosphonic acid), 2_phosphonobutane_1,2,4_tricarboxylic acid, diethylenetriaminepenta(methylenephosphonic acid), or [and] mixtures thereof.

5. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said partially neutralized anionic polymer is a polyacrylate comprising from about 10% to about 90% by weight of a substituted acrylic monomer or salt thereof having the general formula



where R_1 or R_2 are independently hydrogen or a C_1 to C_4 alkyl or hydroxyalkyl, [and] R_3 is hydrogen or an alkali metal salt, and n is a positive number.

8. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said multi-step cleaning process is selected from laundry washing, dishwashing, warewashing, hard surface cleaning, clean-in-place cleaning and clean-out-of-place cleaning.

11. (Amended) The method of Claim 10 wherein said at least one other rinse solution is acidic, caustic or neutral.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of applying a cleaning solution to said substrate [with a main wash solution] which is an enzymatic solution, a caustic solution, an acidic solution, a neutral solution, or a mixture thereof.

16. (Amended) The method of Claim [15] 1 wherein said substrate is a hard surface [is a surface that comes into] and said gross soils on said hard surface result from said hard surface having contact with food.

17. (Amended) The method of Claim 15 wherein said hard surface is a pipeline, bulk tank, tank in a transportation vehicle or silo.

21. (Amended) A multi-step method for cleaning hard surfaces comprising the steps of:

- a) flushing a hard surface with a pre-rinse solution said pre-rinse solution comprising water and a partially neutralized anionic polymer; and
- b) further comprising at least one other step which is either flushing said hard surface with at least one other rinse solution said rinse solution being either acidic, caustic or neutral, or cleaning said hard surface with a main wash solution, or both.

24. (Amended) The method of Claim 21 wherein said pre-rinse solution comprises from about

25 to about 10000 ppm of said partially neutralized anionic polymer.